

# Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2013 Research Scholars

## Tracy Carter

### *Project Title:*

Profiles of Classroom Engagement in Head Start Children: Implications for Academic Readiness

### *Mentor:*

Rebecca Bulotsky-Shearer

### *Project Funding Years:*

2013-2015

### *University Affiliation:*

University of Miami

### *Project Abstract:*

Research is needed to examine profiles of children's classroom engagement so teachers have tools to identify the children in greatest need of intervention before they transition to kindergarten. This study will use contextualized observations of 528 children's engagement with teachers, peers and tasks to identify their membership in engagement profiles. Specifically, this study will use a latent profile approach to analyze data collected through a larger University Head Start partnership research project in Miami-Dade County. This will be the first study to use a latent profile analysis to identify profiles of children's classroom engagement within a culturally and linguistically diverse sample of Head Start children. This study will also be the first to examine whether children's patterns of classroom engagement change across a year in Head Start and whether child and classroom-level factors are associated with that change. This is important, as it will inform our understanding of natural points of intervention for children within early childhood programs. Lastly, this study will extend prior research by examining the differential association between engagement profiles and gains in academic skills. Understanding how distinct profiles of engagement are associated with academic readiness is critical information needed to inform curricular and intervention efforts that can maximize engagement in learning for children in greatest need of intervention prior to kindergarten entry.

### *Sample:*

204 Miami-Dade Head Start Children across 34 participating classrooms,  
2011-2012

324 Miami-Dade Head Start Children across 38 participating classrooms,  
2012-2013

*Measures:*

Observed classroom engagement

- The Individualized Classroom Assessment Scoring System (inCLASS)

Observed classroom process quality

- The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

English language screener

- Preschool Language Assessment Scale (PreLAS)

Academic readiness.

- The Learning Express (LE)

## **Colleen Morrison**

*Project Title:*

Risk and Protective Factors during the Perinatal Period

*Mentor:*

Brenda Jones Harden

*Project Funding Years:*

2013-2015

*University Affiliation:*

University of Maryland

*Project Abstract:*

The goal of the proposed study is to enhance knowledge of perinatal depression (i.e., depression that occurs during pregnancy or within the first 12 months following delivery) and its impact on maternal functioning in low-income, African American women, as well as the health and developmental outcomes of their young infants. The research objectives of the study are: (1) To enhance our knowledge of perinatal depression in low-income, African American women; (2) To consider how specific environmental factors, beyond poverty, such as trauma exposure and environmental chaos, impact perinatal depression in low-income, African American women; (3) To enhance our knowledge of maternal fetal attachment in low-income, African American pregnant women; (4) To consider how specific risk and protective factors, such as maternal depression, maternal health practices during pregnancy, and maternal fetal attachment impact neonatal health and

developmental outcomes; and (5) To examine the association between maternal psychological functioning (pre and postnatal) and the mother-infant relationship in low-income, African American mother-child dyads. It is anticipated that knowledge gained from this study will facilitate the design of effective interventions for pregnant women enrolled in EHS, particularly those at risk for perinatal depression, and the design of EHS interventions for high-risk families during early infancy.

*Sample:*

120 pregnant, African American women enrolled in Early Head Start in Wards 6, 7 and 8 of Washington, D.C.  
(Anticipated final sample of 98 mothers due to attrition.)

*Measures:*

- Screen Measure (to be created)
- Demographic and Pregnancy Background (to be created)
- The Trauma History Questionnaire (THQ)
- The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
- Maternal Antenatal Attachment Scale (MAAS)
- The Health Practices in Pregnancy Questionnaire-II (HPQ-II)
- Windshield Survey
- Neonatal Outcomes (to be created)
- Maternal Postnatal Attachment Scale (MPAS)
- Bayley Infant Neurodevelopmental Screener (BINS)
- Interaction Rating Scale (IRS)

## **Rachel Eisenberg**

*Project Title:*

Home Visiting Quality and Parent Engagement: Examining Mediation by Parenting Self-Efficacy

*Mentor:*

Patricia Manz

*Project Funding Years:*

2013-2015

*University Affiliation:*

Lehigh University

*Project Abstract:*

The project aims to evaluate parenting self-efficacy (PSE) as the mechanism of change through which quality home visiting predicts parent engagement can inform key outcome indicators for home visiting programs and can introduce additional mechanisms for supporting parent engagement, and ultimately child outcomes. Four goals guide this research project: Goal 1: To formulate and strengthen a collaborative partnership with the EHS program; Goal 2: To examine the mediating role of PSE on the relationship of home visiting quality and parents' engagement of their children in early learning activities; Goal 3: To collaborate with EHS families and staff to interpret the findings of this study in a manner that can inform EHS practice and future research; Goal 4: To disseminate findings from this study and advance the future development of high quality home visiting to enhance the PSE and active engagement of parents in children's early learning. Achieving project goals and objectives will meet the HS Performance Standards and the federal MIECHV regulations for enhancing empirically based home visiting for at-risk families and understanding home visiting processes that improve parenting.

*Sample:*

Year 1

60 Community Development Partner (CDP)-parent dyads (six CDPs and each CDP's associated 10 families) from an eastern PA EHS program. This EHS program serves a largely Hispanic community of about 170 children from 0 to 3.

Year 2

An estimated 50 families and 17 home visitors from the same EHS program as participants for Year 1. EHS families are primarily Hispanic and about 50% are Spanish speaking, and CDPs are all female and 35% are bilingual.

*Measures:*

Year 1

- Home Visit Rating Scales- Adapted (HOVRS-A+)
- Maternal Self-Efficacy Scale
- Parents Engagement and Provision for Toddler's Early Learning (PEPTEL)
- Home visitor and family demographics (form)

Year 2

- Questions for facilitators (form to be developed)
- Home visitor and family demographics (form)

**Alana Schnitz**

*Project Title:*

# Examining the Effects of Parent Training on Parents' Use of Social Emotional Preventative Practices and the Effects on Parent-Child Interactions and Child Behavior

## *Mentor:*

Mary Louise Hemmeter

## *Project Funding Years:*

2013-2015

## *University Affiliation:*

Vanderbilt University

## *Project Abstract:*

Vanderbilt University, Metro Action Commission Head Start, and Mid-Cumberland Head Start will investigate the effects of a social-emotional parenting intervention called *Positive Solutions for Families*. *Positive Solutions for Families* is based on the *Pyramid Model* framework, which is a model for enhancing social-emotional development and addressing challenging behavior. This study has four objectives: (a) to examine the effects of training with individualized support on parent-child interactions, (b) to examine the effects of *Positive Solutions for Families* implementation on child behavior and social-emotional development, (c) to evaluate family stress and the effects stress has on implementation fidelity and child challenging behavior, and (d) to evaluate parents' perceptions and satisfaction with group training and individualized follow-up phone meetings. Findings from this study will support the use of evidence-based practices with Head Start families, inform practice related to working with and meeting the needs of Head Start families, and promote positive interactions between parents and children that support children's social-emotional development. Head Start Family Service Specialists (FSSs) will also receive training, materials, and support on this intervention so they may sustain the intervention after the study is complete.

## *Sample:*

- Three centers from each of the 2 Head Start programs (first cohort)
- Three cohorts over the course of two years - cohort 1 will begin in the fall of 2013, cohort 2 in the spring of 2014, and cohort 3 in the fall of 2014.
- Cohorts will include approximately 67 families with half of the families assigned to the control group and half to the intervention group.
- Families with at least one child that is at least 3 and no older than 5-years-old will be eligible to participate in the intervention.

## *Measures:*

- Center and personnel demographic questionnaire

- Parent and child demographic questionnaire
- Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)
- Parenting Stress Index (PSI)
- Dyadic Parent-Child Interaction Coding System (DPICS)
- Interobserver agreement (IOA)